

Chapter 1 Different Circumstance

The house was silent as the dust of the attack settled. A small child could be heard whimpering as a sudden whirlwind of energy swirled through the sitting room. Two beings seemed to materialize from nothingness. After a moment of disorientation, the two looked around, confused.

"You sure the spell worked?" the dark haired man asked.

The woman with long red hair nodded.

"Yes. It worked."

The man looked around before his eyes settled on the mantle, where his eyes grew moist. He slowly walked over and picked up the photo, and looked upon it, happiness and sadness both in his eyes as a few tears began to fall.

"Lily." He whispered.

Lily Potter nee Evans looked over to her husband as he held the photo out to her. Looking down, she felt her heart clench with emotions. The picture was of a small dark haired infant, smiling up at his father as the man looked lovingly down at his son. The boy looked at least a year old. Lily looked up at her husband, tears running down her pale cheeks.

"He's alive here, James." She whispered, her voice choked with emotion.

James nodded and both froze at the cry from the second floor. Both Potter's headed for the steps, lightening quick and pushed the half open door all the way open and froze. Lily placed a hand over her mouth as James' jaw dropped.

"Oh my."

Lying on the ground was another Lily Potter, her eyes vacant as the baby seemed to try to wake her. James moved over and picked up the small boy, feeling his heart swell with happiness while Lily moved to her double and closed her eyes.

"We'll take care of him. I promise." She told her double.

She rose to her feet and looked at James, who was hugging his son, crying silently as the child hugged him back. Lily moved over and placed a hand on James' shoulder. The man looked at her, a watery smile on his face.

"It's him, Lily. He's alive here."

Lily nodded and smiled sadly. James placed the boy into her arms and saw her tender, caring expression as she stroked the child's cheek, trying hard not to cry. A sudden noise caused them to spin around, wands drawn. James' moved first, hurrying out of the room, wand at the ready. With a silent leap, he landed at the bottom of the stairs, his wand raised at the shape in the doorway.

"Identify yourself before you find your ass missing." James snarled.

The man froze, raising his hands. When he spoke, his aged voice carried his confusion, even though James' couldn't see his face.

"J-James? But...the wards...How?" Albus Dumbledore asked.

James didn't lower his wand.

"Dumbledore. How convenient. Timed it perfectly, did you?" James shot at him.

The old man was truly confused as Lily came down the stairs, Harry sucking on the bottle she held for him. She narrowed her eyes for a few seconds, before turning to her husband.

"Lower your wand, dear. His aura is pure."

James lowered his wand and motioned for the man to enter. Albus Dumbledore followed them to the sitting room and sat down, thoroughly relieved, but confused. He didn't waste anytime in asking his question.

"How are you both alive? The wards Lily and I cast would only fail if you both died."

Lilly was now confused.

"What do you mean, you and I set?"

Albus narrowed his eyes, hand going for his wand.

"What kind of trick is this? I should kill you both for trying to take the Potter's son!"

Albus had not counted on James' laughing as he stood up.

"Professor, I believe we both have made several assumptions tonight. So let's stop making asses of ourselves. We'll explain as best we can, if you'll explain as best you can."

Seeing the nod, James began.

"We aren't the Lily and James of this dimension. You see, six months ago, under orders from your other self in our dimension, we went into hiding, with Peter as secret keeper. Two nights, two bloody nights after we entered this cottage, he attacked. He made us watch while he killed our son. Then left, laughing all the way. Lilly was distraught and she began looking at some way to save Harry. She found a way, but it would require us to leave our dimension and look for another one where we could save him. If we died, so be it. As long as our son had a mother and father, we would be willing to sacrifice ourselves. It's what your counterpart talked us into."

Albus looked outrage.

"I cannot believe that! I would never, ever allow anyone to die if there was another way!"

James looked at Lily who nodded. So far, this Dumbledore was the kind hearted leader of Light that his counter part pretended to be. James continued.

"Be that as it may, we were prepared to die for our son. We hadn't counted on coming here just after our counterparts were murdered. But it looks as if Voldemort is dead and gone."

Albus breathed a sigh before looking sadly at the two.

"I had tried to talk you out of it Lily. You had found a charm that would use your sacrifice of love to protect Harry from that monster. As much as I sought for another answer, I could not find one. It seems though, that it worked."

Lily nodded her head before adjusting Harry.

"What now, Professor?" She asked.

He paused and looked thoughtful for a moment.

"I'd suggest we have a private funeral for your counterparts. Alas, we will have to tell the minister about this. And-"

Whatever was next was cut off by the scream from on Sirius Black.'

"PRONGS! LILY! Please God, be alive!"

James moved quickly.

"Sitting room, Padfoot. And please keep your voice down."

The sound of running footsteps brought the sight of a distraught Sirius Black skidding into the room. His look of relief was all they needed to see. Sirius pulled James into a tight embrace before hugging Lily herself. He looked down at Harry, smiling before he began to frown.

"What's with the cut?" He asked.

Lily glanced down and spotted the strange lightening shaped cut on her son's forehead. Albus looked over before he rose and moved to Sirius' side.

"If I may, Lily? I'd like to check for any after effects from the curse."

Lily nodded and Dumbledore smiled down at Harry as he pointed his wand over the child. Muttering a short complicated spell, a set of colors began to appear in the air. Most of them were blue and green, with the odd hint of red, but a small black orb appeared, making Albus frown. He shook his head, and redid the spell, getting the same results. Lily looked up at him, seeing the anger on the old man's face.

"What? What is it?" She asked worriedly.

"I can not believe this! That inhuman, evil, son of-" He paused at Lily's warning look. "gum chewer." He finished embarrassedly.

James chuckled a bit as Sirius looked at the headmaster in shock. Lily, however, was worried about what Albus had seen.

"What is it?" She asked again.

Albus took a calming breath before speaking, but his anger was still present.

"Riddle came here with the intent to make a Horcrux. I never suspected he had even heard of them, as anything to do with the subject are banned material. Only those going for Master's in Defense or going into Curse Breaking are even aware of them." He explained.

Sirius' face hardened at the information.

"And let me guess? The evil toad has a bit of his soul stuck to my godson?"

Albus nodded, while Lily and James gasped.

"I can, however remove the soul fragment, as it was not meant to be attached to him. However, it will hurt him." He warned.

Lily looked over at James, who nodded his head.

"Do it." She whispered.

Albus nodded and rolled up his sleeves before pulling a strange rectangular box out of his robes and placing it on the table. Before anyone could ask, he looked over at James and Sirius.

"When I remove this soul fragment, it will try to flee. I need you both to use the capture charms on it and hold it in place. From there, the three of us will force it into this little device I designed to capture Riddle, had everything else failed."

Both men nodded as the old man looked to Lily.

"You're going to be the anchor for Harry. Since it is still relatively fresh, so to speak, the fragment will not have attached sufficiently for Harry to be at any risk. However, it will be quicker with you as his anchor." Albus explained.

The young woman nodded her head as Albus took a deep breath.

"Here goes, Lady and Gents."

With that, he began channeling his magic. Albus held his wand, point first over the scar, and began to slowly pull it up, straining as the soul tried desperately to remain in its host. He tried to hurry the process as young Harry began to wail in pain, making the old man feel guilty for hurting the child. He looked up as he felt a hand on his to see Lily looking at him with determination.

"It's alright Albus. Let's get this damn thing taken care of now instead of later."

The old man nodded and poured even more magic into the spell and yanked back in one fluid motion, tearing the soul fragment from Harry. Just as he predicted, the fragment immediately tried to flee, only to be hit by Sirius' capture charm. The beam of red energy lanced around the fragment, writhing like a snake as it held tight. James quickly activated his and the two struggled to keep it held over the small rectangle box Dumbledore had created.

"James. Ease off your charm. I don't want half my face burned off." Sirius warned as the energy from James' charm threatened to do just that.

Albus spotted something that could possibly end bad.

"Watch it you two. Don't cross the streams."

Sirius glanced over to him.

"Why?"

"Would you like to be ripped apart by a total protonic reversal?"

Sirius wisely shut his mouth and waited as Albus readied himself.

"Center it over the table." He ordered.

Both men forced the thing over the box as Albus tapped it with his wand before sending his own charm to stabilize the fragment. The box gave off a vortex of light and power that seemed to be trying to suck the fragment into the box. Albus spotted the curious glances.

"Don't look directly into the trap." He warned.

"I looked into the trap, Professor." Sirius stated, looking worried.

Albus growled in frustration and began lowering the thing into the box, the other two quickly following suit. The thing tried to claw its way out of the trap's gaping maw, but failed. With a final shout, the fragment was forced into the trap, and it sealed itself with a burst of magic. All three men were sweating as Lily tended to Harry in the kitchen. Sirius was the first to recover and tapped the box with his foot, prompting Albus to shake his head.

"Well...that went better than I predicted." Albus stated as he tucked the device away in his cloak.

Albus stayed for another hour while Lily and James explained everything to Sirius, who was saddened that his friend from this reality was gone, but he still had James from the other reality. It would take some getting used to, but they would manage. Just before the professor left, he paused to ask Lily and James where they would move to, as Godric's Hallow was no longer safe. Lily looked over at James before looking at the Professor, one place coming to mind.

"Crawley."

-X-X-X-X-X-

Albus sighed as he leaned back into his chair, letting his stress bleed off. It had been a day and a half since the attack on Godric's Hallow. As far as the wizarding world was concerned, Harry Potter had somehow defeated Voldemort after his parents had been rendered unconscious. He rubbed his temples to get rid of his headache before a sudden vibration caught his attention. He quickly

grabbed the book in question and opened it wide as it flew to the page of possible students. He saw a new name appearing on the register, along with an age and birthdate.

"Hmm...muggleborn. Let's see...born nineteen September nineteen-seventy-nine. Name...Hermione Jean Granger...Hmmm...Interesting..." Albus spoke slowly as he watched a small gold line snake to young Harry James Potter's name.

Albus smiled to himself.

"I think time at Hogwarts will be very interesting in the next decade."

Chapter 2 Bonds and Puppies

Lily looked around the nursery and nodded in satisfaction. It had been over a day since they had quickly relocated to a small Potter residence in Crawley. It did make her curious as to how the house seemed to be the answer to their prayers, but James had told her that he remembered about it after she had mentioned the place. So now, she was watching as Harry crawled after the small cat the family owned. Midnight seemed hesitant around Harry, making Lily smile as the cat remained just out of reach for the toddler.

"He's persistent."

Lily nodded as James entered the room, wrapping his arms around his wife.

"He's got so much life in him James. I wonder what his future will be like?"

James grinned.

"Probably a Quidditch Chaser, star of the team, with a gorgeous bookworm of his own on his arm."

Lily laughed as she leaned back into James, enjoying the feeling of his warmth.

"I think you just described yourself, dear."

James chuckled.

"Maybe a little." He admitted.

They both laughed as little Harry looked up at them, smiling his innocent smile.

"Mum."

Lily froze and looked down at Harry, shock on her face while James smiled proudly. Lily dropped to the ground in front of her son, looking at him with pride.

"Say it again Harry."

The toddler beamed at her.

"Mum." He replied happily.

Lily lifted him up, hugging him tightly as Harry giggled.

"I'm so proud of you, Harry!"

James walked over and looked at his son, who smiled happily at him.

"Can you say 'dad' son?" He asked.

Harry smiled widely.

"Mum."

James shook his head, grinning while Lily smirked.

"Seems to me, he thinks he has two mothers."

James chuckled and patted his son on the head before he went ridged, looking off into the distance. Lily spotted his wand in hand and sent him a concerned look.

"James?"

"Frank and Alice are under attack. Their wards just fell."

She nodded her head, adjusting her hold on Harry.

"Go."

James spun on the spot and vanished with a quiet pop, leaving a worriedly Lily staring at the spot he had just been.

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Frank Longbottom was having a bad day. A really bad day. It had started off okay when he had woken up. Voldemort was gone, and Death Eaters were being taken in left and right. But an hour into his morning, Bellatrix and her group of Death Eaters had shown up. And right now, he was being tortured under the cruciactious curse, all the

while they were demanding he tell them the location of their master. It was a relief when the spell was lifted. After a moment, once he got his breathing under control, he shakily looked up and tried to smile, it came out as a grimace.

"Well, nice of you two to join us."

James hurried over and checked Frank while Sirius moved and began checking Alice. After a few moments, James sighed in relief.

"You'll be fine after a week or so. Until then, you're going to experience muscle spasms and random twitches for a while." James explained.

"What about Alice?" Frank asked.

"She'll be fine in a day or two. Now, we're going to get you both to St. Mungo's." James explained.

Frank nodded and looked over to see the four Death Eaters who had attacked him and his wife. Each of them was unconscious, bound, and wandless. He only hoped that they got what they deserved.

-X-X-X-X-X-

Lily gently pushed the stroller as she and her son went to the park to enjoy the nice weather. James had floored twenty minutes ago letting her know that both Frank and Alice were fine, but would be in the hospital for awhile. He, would be busy as they were going to question the four responsible once he got done with his call. So now her she was, a fifteen month old baby at the park. Sighing she found a nearby bench that only had one occupant. Another young mother was watching over her own daughter who was having a blast playing in the sand box. Lily walked over, and sent the woman a small smile.

"Mind if I sit here?" She asked.

The woman looked over and her and shook her head, smiling. Lily sat down and sighed, enjoying the feeling of being off of her feet. The other woman chuckled.

"I take it your son doesn't walk yet?" She asked.

Lily shook her head making the woman laugh.

"Just wait. You think it's a blessing to sit now. A few months and you'll be begging for your little one to stay put."

Lily laughed along with her before she extended her hand.

"Lily Potter. This little rascal is Harry."

The woman shook her hand, smiling.

"Miranda Granger. The little angel playing in the sand is Hermione."

"Hermione. Interesting name. It's Shakespeare, if I'm not mistaken."

Miranda nodded her head.

"Her father loves to read. And he seemed to think it was perfect for her. When she asks who's idea it was, I'm dropping his name to her."

Lily giggled before she heard Harry call her.

"Mum." He held his little arms out, asking to be picked up.

Lily picked him up and held him, while fishing for his bottle. After a brief moment, Harry was happily sucking on his bottle, while Miranda looked over at him, smiling lightly.

"I see he can talk."

Lily snorted.

"Not really. Only word he knows is 'Mum'. My husband, James, tried to get him to say 'dad.' Instead, he got called 'mum'."

Miranda chuckled as her own daughter walked over to her, granted unsteadily, holding a small dandelion in her small hands.

"Mummy. Flower." She said in a small voice with a smile.

Miranda took the small dandelion, smiling at her daughter. Miranda placed the flower down and hoisted Hermione into her lap, and pulling out a small juice box, which Hermione happily accepted. Miranda looked at Lily as she placed the empty bottle from Harry, burping the small boy.

"How long have you lived in Crawley?"

"Only a few days. We recently moved from Godric's Hollow." Lily explained.

Miranda nodded her head in understanding.

"So what do you and your husband do?"

"James is a police officer. He's been assigned to a case that involves a group of terrorists that pose a risk to the country."

Miranda nodded again.

"And what about you?"

Lily looked at Harry with a loving smile as he yawned slightly.

"I'm happy and content to raise my son. Though I do have the option to teach at my old boarding school was I get my degree though."

"Yes. I know how you feel. I'm actually going to school for dentistry. My husband is in the service. A Marine to be exact."

Lily laughed lightly.

"A Marine with a daughter? Well, I feel sorry for her future boyfriends. A father is scary enough to them, but a Marine?"

Both women laughed as Hermione finished her own juice box. The laughter continued for a few moments before Lily heard James calling over to her. She looked over her shoulder and smiled at him as he and Sirius made their way across the playground. James leaned down and kissed Lily briefly before grinning at his son.

"Can you say 'Dad' yet., Harry?"

"Mum."

James shook his head and chuckled.

"Guess not." He muttered as Sirius snickered.

"Try 'Padfoot' Harry."

Harry looked up at him with something akin to concentration.

"Pafoo."

James mocked hurt as he looked at his son.

"You can say Mum and almost say Padfoot, but Dad still escapes your vocabulary. Alas, I have been replaced." He spoke solemnly.

Sirius clapped his shoulder, grinning at him.

"Easy there Prongs. It's not the end of the world. Anyway, I'll head back home. Just wanted to see my Godson."

Lily sent him a small wave as the man headed back toward the entrance while Miranda looked at James in amusement.

"Interesting nicknames." She stated as Hermione slid off her mother's lap and walked over to look at Harry. The boy seemed just as interested in her as he stared right at her.

"Favorite animal is a stag. He's been calling me Prongs since we were sixteen." James explained.

"Mummy. Baby." Hermione pointed at Harry.

Miranda nodded.

"Yes, sweetheart. He is."

Hermione smiled and looked back at Harry.

"Hermione." She spoke, pointing to herself.

Harry blinked.

"Mione." He repeated.

The little girl shook her head.

"Hermione."

"Mione."

Lily laughed as the little girl pouted at Harry's inability to say her name correctly.

"It's okay, little one. Harry still has trouble saying certain words. I sure he will be able to say your name soon enough."

The little girl nodded and reached out a small hand toward Harry. Harry, being the curious baby he was, reached out his own tiny hand. When they touched hands, Lily and James felt a small pulse of magic. Nothing showy, or flashy, just a brief pulse. She kept her expression schooled, but glanced at James, who let out the tiniest of nods before chuckling.

"Seems Harry here is already such a lady killer. Why not even two yet and already stealing hearts." He chuckled.

Lily laughed, but it was somewhat forced. She turned to Miranda, still smiling.

"Perhaps we should schedule a play date for these two? They seem to get along."

Miranda nodded.

"Yes. Hermione has trouble meeting new people. She can be very shy at times."

"Harry can be like that too. Well, here is our home phone number. Give me a call whenever you'd like to set something up." She told Miranda as she scribbled her number on a slip of paper.

The other mother accepted the note.

"I will. I don't know why, but I think these two are going to be friends for a very long time." She told them with some confusion.

After a few pleasantries, James and Lily left as Miranda gathered up Hermione, heading off to home herself. When the three Potters arrived home, Lily turned to James.

"You felt it." It wasn't a question.

"Yes. I have no idea what it was about, but I believe that young Hermione is a witch."

Lily nodded as she picked Harry up out of the stroller and headed off for the nursery.

"I think that was a bond of some sort, James. Both of their magics seemed to reach out for the other. You know of what it might be?"

James frowned as he thought over the information.

"Could be anything. A friendship type bond. Marriage. Hell, could even be a soul bond. I really don't know. Only time will tell us which, though I'm pretty sure marriage bond is out."

Lily sighed and understood what James was saying as she placed Harry in the crib. The little one fell asleep almost as soon as he was set down. She exited the room and dropped down on the sofa, letting her mind wander.

"Stop thinking so loud. I can hear the gears grinding from over here."

James ducked the sofa cushion.

"Prat. I'm just wondering about his future."

James nodded and sat down next to her, pulling her close.

"I told you what I thought this morning." He stated with a weary grin.

Lily smiled.

"Yes, but that is still along way off. Do we tell them?" She asked James.

"Not until she shows the first signs of magic. Otherwise, they might think we're nutters."

-X-X-X-X-X-

Lily sat in her kitchen three days later, enjoying a cup of tea while Harry played with his toys. He still was trying to learn to walk, but just couldn't seem to grasp the importance of balance. She thought it was cute at how determined he was to learn, hoping it kept with him through school. Add to the fact that he was becoming friends with little Hermione, and well, Lily couldn't be happier. Sure, it helped the fact that she and Miranda got along famously, and that James and Jack seemed to get along well enough. She was just finishing her tea when she heard a small yip. At first, she thought she was hearing things, but looking down at the second yip, she noticed a small black puppy, looking up at her, wagging its little tail. Sure, it was adorable, but she had no idea where it came from.

"Sirius?" She called out.

Said Black entered the room, wiping his hands on a wash towel, looking curious.

"Yes?"

"Did you get Harry a puppy?" She asked him, pointing to the small black puppy running over to said man.

Sirius picked the puppy up, looking fairly confused as he answered.

"No. I don't even know where this little guy came from." He told her before looking the puppy over.

His widened eyes and gasp made her concerned.

"Lily." He croaked out. "It's Harry!"

Lily shot up and took the puppy. Her own eyes widened as she spotted the green eyes of her son, as the puppy tried to lick her.

"JAMES!" She cried out.

James, who had been in the sitting room, going over his paperwork for his latest arrest came skidding into the room, looking at his wife frantically.

"What? What's wrong?"

She simply passed him the puppy. James looked at the small dog before his reaction matched Lily's.

"H-Harry?"

The puppy yipped in response. James turned directly to Sirius.

"What's with turning my son into a dog, Padfoot?" he asked.

Sirius held up his hands.

"Wasn't me. I popped in to see Harry before heading to the bathroom. Next thing I know, Lily was asking if I bought Harry a puppy."

James looked back at his son, a mixture of awe and pride in his eyes.

"If this is true...then...Harry has become the youngest animagus...ever."

Lily, however, was more concerned with the fact that her son may not be able to transform back.

"We need to see the Headmaster."

Even though she was aware that both of them knew the reversal spell, she wanted to know just what had caused this. Both men agreed and they apparated to Hogsmeade. Lily lead the procession up to the school, passing through the main doors and up the stairs and finally to the Headmaster's office. They didn't know the password, but the Gargoyle leapt aside, allowing them access to the rotating stairs. A short knock, followed by an enter, and they found themselves standing in Albus Dumbledore's office. The old man looked up at them, curious.

"Well, to what do I owe this unexpected visit?"

Lily simply pointed at the puppy.

"My son some how ended up as a dog. Any idea how?"

Albus looked at the puppy in shock before looking at Sirius, amusement in his eyes.

"I must admit, Mr. Black. I am shocked you'd turn the poor boy into a puppy. Though, he is an adorable one at that." Albus mused,

Sirius looked at him with irritation.

"I did not turn him into a pup. I went to the bathroom, came back and Lily was asking if I had bought Harry a dog."

Albus chuckled before looking over at the puppy that seemed to want down.

"I believe that, even though the Horcrux was removed in a timely manner, some abilities of Tom's may have been passed on to Harry. Animagus looks like one of them."

Lily looked uneasily at Albus who correctly interrupted her worry.

"Harry is not Tom, Lily. He simply has been granted a few extra abilities. Harry is not a Dark Wizard reborn." He stated firmly.

Lily nodded, feeling a bit better.

"Can you change him back? I don't trust these two." She gestured to Sirius and James, both who looked scandalized.

Albus chuckled and cast the reversal spell, reverting Harry back to the happy, giggling toddler he was. Lily hugged her son tightly before looking back to the Headmaster.

"Thank you, Professor. I hope he won't do this again for a long time."

Albus chuckled again.

"Yes. I daresay the Marauders will be active once again in ten short years." His eyes twinkled brightly.

Lily sighed and nodded her head, knowing it was almost a guarantee. But all were broken from their reverie by Harry.

"Dad." Harry spoke clearly, looking at James.

The man grinned and took his son.

"Bout time, kiddo. Thought you'd of forgotten about me."

Harry giggled and hugged his father as Albus watched with amusement.

"Thank you for your time Headmaster. I hope we don't get anymore surprises anytime soon."

Albus nodded.

"Yes. That would be for the best."

But he knew that was wishful thinking at best.

Chapter 3 And you think your life is strange

James walked to the front door, wondering who it was. Pulling it open, he grinned.

"Well, Mr. Moony decides to grace us with his presence." James teased as he pulled his old friend into a brief hug.

Remus chuckled before responding.

"I just got back from my mission. How are you and Lily?" He asked, eyeing his friend with some concern.

"Not bad. How much did Sirius tell you?"

Both men headed toward the kitchen. James went to the fridge, pulling out a two beers and placing one in front of Remus, who popped the top off, and taking a brief swig.

"Just enough. I must admit, it is confusing, but nothing that we can't get used to. How's Harry?"

"He's a Marauder alright! Little tyke turned into a pup of some kind. Sirius says he's more wolf like, but he doesn't recognize the breed." James replied, pride in his voice.

Remus, however, narrowed his eyes.

"He turned into a pup, you said?" He asked slowly.

James nodded, drinking another mouthful before responding.

"Yeah. Albus thinks it's something to do with the Horcrux Harry had attached to him."

Remus sighed. He had heard about that. He also started to smirk, making James ask him what was so funny.

"He was speaking with Albus a few days ago. Apparently he looked into some kind of trap and he's been experiencing very strange sensations. Apparently, the trap Albus designed is intended to pull a spirit into it, and Sirius' soul was...jarred loose. Not much to pose a

problem, but enough to warrant extended convalescences leave until it settles." Remus explained.

James nodded in relief as Remus polished his drink off.

"So, now, let's talk about Harry. Can you get him to transform again? Maybe I can identify the breed."

James nodded.

"Sure. As soon as you tell me how your mission went."

Remus sighed in defeat.

"We got Greyback. Almost didn't when I got Albus' message. Thankfully, Madeye put my head back on straight and I was able to get the dirty bastard."

James gave him a knowing look before pressing the subject.

"What happened?"

"He forced his transformation." He stated simply.

James sprayed the beer he'd been about to swallow across the table.

"That's insane! That could have killed him!"

"And me." Remus muttered.

James was about to grill his friend, when Remus continued.

"He threatened to come after Harry, and...I snapped, just after he morphed. I forced my transformation...and I killed him. Madeye was truly freaked out, but I was able to retain my mind. We think I somehow weakened the wolf with in. Maybe I'll be able to beat it back this next transformation." He mused.

Remus wasn't expecting the smack to the back of his head from Lily, who had entered with Harry. The man rubbed his head sheepishly before Lily tore into him.

"Remus Jonathan Lupin! How completely irresponsible! You could have killed yourself!" She scolded.

"Now Lily." Remus began. "I'm perfectly fine, and everything worked out in the end." He reasoned.

Lily huffed, adjusting a struggling Harry in her arms. She sighed in aspiration, looking at her son.

"You just want to show off your new skill, you little Marauder." She scolded, half smiling.

Harry simply giggled as Lily set him on the ground. James and Remus watched as Harry stood shakily to his feet before taking several unstable steps to James, who dropped to his knees to catch his son in a hug. James lifted the giggling toddler into the air, grinning widely.

"Alright, Harry! I'm so proud of you, kiddo!"

Remus watched with a bemused look as James hugged his son tightly, all the while, little Harry was giggling happily as his dad hugged him. Lily smiled fondly as she watched her husband with Harry. It made all her effort worth it. After a moment, she looked to Remus, seriousness etched on her face.

"You think you can tell us what his form is?"

Remus nodded.

"Should be able to. I'm just surprised you haven't gone to Dumbledore yet to ask him."

Lily snorted.

"I'm a fully qualified witch. And James...well, he's an acceptable wizard. We don't need to run to the Headmaster for everything."

James blew a raspberry at her.

"Not all of us were graced with Outstandings in every subject." He shot back.

"And at least James never went over the test after we had taken them. That was a bit annoying Lily." Remus smirked.

Lily sent them a sour look.

"I was just worried and wanted to make sure I had my information straight."

James laughed as Remus let out a small chuckle before turning to James.

"Alright. See if he'll transform. Then, I'll try to identify the breed."

James nodded and placed Harry on the ground.

"Alright Harry. Become the puppy again."

Harry probably didn't understand what James had asked, but he seemed to understand puppy. Remus watched in fascination as Harry transformed into the small black pup again and proceeded to yip excitedly as he walked over to Remus. The werewolf picked the pup up and smiled as he scratched it behind the ears. The puppy laid down on his lap, eyes half closed. After a moment, he passed the pup back to James where Harry transformed back into his human form.

"He's a grey wolf, but a variant with a black pelt. He'll be a pretty good size one once he reaches maturity."

James grinned at his son.

"You'll need a Marauder name, son."

Lily rolled her eyes, smiling lightly.

"Great. Another prankster. I just hope he'll apply himself to his studies as much as you three will corrupt him with your pranks."

"Sweet heart, you wound me! You think I would encourage our son to be a rule breaker?"

"Yes." Lily responded while Remus laughed at his friends predicament.

James scowled before holding Harry up to eye level.

"They have no faith in me. At least my son knows I'm good for something more than being a prankster. Isn't that right, Harry?"

Harry proceeded to spit up on his father, and giggled as Lily took Harry away, trying not to laugh.

"I get no respect."

Remus decided not to laugh, but instead, give James a bit of good news.

"Malfoy's finally been arrested. They searched his home and discovered several dark artifacts. His wife is estatic he's going behind bars. Seems he wasn't the nicest husband."

James sighed.

"Narcissia didn't deserve to be stuck with Malfoy. Hell, my oh so loving cousin married her daughter off into what she knew would be an abusive relationship."

Remus nodded his head in understanding.

"Yep. And now, at least, her son, Draco, will turn out better with his father gone, than with him there. Can you imagine that?"

James rolled his eyes as he finished cleaning the puke off his robes.

"Another pureblood bigot with a ego the size of England. Hopefully, Narcissia will be a better influence on him."

"Hopefully." Remus agreed.

-x-x-x-x-x-x-

Albus Dumbledore looked over the diary again. Another Horcrux. He wondered just how many Riddle had made. And if that was the case, than he was most defiantly alive. He placed the Diary in his secure desk drawer, under the heaviest wards he knew, and leaned back from his desk. He would make sure that the innocents never had to

suffer Riddle again, and even as his thoughts flickered to the prophecy, he swore to himself, that if he had any say in it, young Harry would not be burdened with it's meaning. He'd take care of Voldemort himself, but he'd help Harry become the great wizard Albus knew he could become. With a small smile on his face, he began looking over the list of students coming in this year, and couldn't wait to begin teaching and passing on the knowledge of thousands of years worth of magic to these young minds, who would shape the magical world in their own way, into a better place for all it's citizens.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-

The years passed smoothly for the Potters. It had been four years since they had shifted dimensions, and they had settled into their lives with no real problems. Today, Lily and Miranda were sitting out back as Harry and Hermione were playing tag, chatting amongst themselves as the two children laughed and played.

"Harry! Come back here!" Hermione cried out as Harry darted away from her outstretched hands.

Harry grinned at her over his shoulder.

"You'll have to catch me, Mione."

Hermione huffed in annoyance. He only called her that because he knew it annoyed her.

"You're gonna get it, Potter." She growled and launched after him.

Harry laughed and took off toward the garden. Hermione ran as fast as she could and managed to tag him as he stumbled over a toy truck. With a triumphant cry, Hermione turned and sped off, searching for a place to catch her breath. Harry managed to recover and looked around, spotting her run behind the shed. He took a moment to catch his breath, before he heard a little voice.

:Please don't hurt me!:

Harry looked down in confusion, spotting a small snake. He bent down and cocked his head to the side as it tried in vain to get away

from him. Harry noticed it had gotten stuck under the truck when he knocked it over.

:I'n not gonna hurt you. Let me get the truck off you.: He replied.

The snake stilled as Harry lifted the toy off of it and smiled.

:All better.:

The snake looked up at him and cocked it's head to the side.

:You speak our tongue.:

Harry raised an eyebrow.

:What do you mean?:

:Perhaps you should speak with your parents. They will be able to explain it to you in ways I cannot. I must go. Thank you for your help, young one.:

Harry watched the snake slither away and stood up. He looked back over to the shed, and spotted Hermione peeking around the side, before yanking her head back. Harry grinned and quickly moved to the shed. Instead of going around the side she did, He decided to go around the side closest to his mother. He quietly came around the side and grinned.

"Gotcha!" He cried out.

Hermione screamed and swung her arm at him. Harry felt himself lifted up and hurled away by an invisible force. Lily had also seen it and quickly drew her wand. She caught Harry in mid air and lowered him to the ground. If she hadn't, he'd have gone through the kitchen window and probably would have been seriously hurt. Beside her, Miranda came to her sense.

"What the hell just happened?"

Lily turned to face her, wand still in hand.

"Miranda, I think you should call Jack. I'll go get James and we'll explain everything to you both."

Miranda hurried inside and rang Jack while Lily called James from the sitting room. James came outside, spotting Lily had her wand in her hand. His questioning look was answered by Lily.

"Hermione just had a bout of accidental magic. She used a pretty powerful banishing charm on Harry, almost sending him through the kitchen window." She explained.

"Where is she?" James asked.

Lily pointed and James followed the direction, seeing Harry trying to praise an extremely shocked Hermione. James could hear his son's excitement.

"That was so cool, Mione! Your going to be a strong witch when you're older!"

This snapped Hermione out of her stupor as she glared at Harry.

"That's not a nice thing to call someone, Harry James Potter!" She scolded.

James snickered, seeing his son wither under her glare.

"N-no! I didn't mean the bad way! My Mum's a witch too!"

The slap echoed around the yard.

"Don't insult your Mum, Harry! That's bad!" She scolded, near tears.

Harry held his hand over his cheek, and his other up in a defensive gesture.

"No. I mean, My Dad is a wizard and my Mum's a witch! You're magical!" He hurriedly explained to her.

Lily moved over to them quickly, to avoid Harry getting slapped again, even though she did think it was funny in this situation.

"What Harry means to say is that we are able to do magic. You just had a outburst of accidental magic. If you'll wait, James and I will explain everything to you and your parents."

Hermione nodded and turned to Harry, looking ashamed of herself.

"I'm sorry Harry. I shouldn't have smacked you."

Harry grinned.

"I've gotten hurt worse falling off Dad's cleansweep."

Apparently, this was something his mother didn't know as she rounded on James, her eyes holding promises of pain toward said man.

"James, dear. What did Harry mean by that?" She asked in a voice too sweet to be anything but pissed.

"Um...er...Oh look, Jack's here." James quickly pulled said man over to the table.

Jack looked around in confusion before speaking.

"Okay. What is going on?"

Miranda slumped in her chair and looked at Lily expectantly.

"If you'll sit down, I'll explain everything."

Jack nodded and sat next to his wife before Lily turned to James.

"Go get the brandy, James. I think they'll need it."

"It's one in the afternoon. Isn't it a tad early for drinks?" Jack asked.

Lily shook her head before she spotted James headed for the house.

"Are you, or aren't you a wizard?" She asked.

Jack looked at James with confusion at Lily's statement. Said Potter grinned sheepishly before pulling out a his wand and pointing it toward the house.

"Accio Brandy."

To Jack and Miranda's amazement, a bottle of brandy flew into James outstretched hand. He walked over and placed the bottle on the table before calling two glasses to him as well. Jack was the first to recover.

"What the...? What was that?" He asked.

"Summoning charm. It allows the caster to summon anything they need."

"Like what? Could you...er...summon Harry if you needed to?" Jack asked.

James grinned and pointed his wand at Harry.

"Accio Harry Potter!"

Harry felt himself move through the air a second time that day.

"HEY!" He cried out as he flew at his father.

James seemed to have misjudged the distance and it only clicked just before Harry impacted into him. The knee of his son impacted into his groin, and the older Potter quickly placed his hands over the impact sight before falling over, groaning in pain. Jack snorted, trying not to laugh as Lily shook her head, looking half amused, half stern.

"Maybe that'll teach you to take Professor Flitwick's teachings seriously." She scolded as James let out another pitiful moan.

Harry shot a glare at his father before going back over to Hermione, and leading her to the table. Jack took a calming breath and looked at Lily with a neutral expression.

"Okay. Can you explain why I am here?"

"Hermione is a witch. She had a bout of accidental magic and used a banishing charm on Harry."

Jack nodded slowly, still keeping his face calm. He'd hear what she had to say. After all, they just had a small demonstration of magic, so he really couldn't sit here and deny it.

"Hermione, is what is termed as a muggleborn. It means she was born to non magical people, or, muggles as they are called. I am a muggleborn as well, and James, the idiot holding his groin, is a pureblood." She explained.

Jack and Miranda nodded, still following.

"Now, the thing is, the world doesn't know about the magical world. We've lived in secret for hundreds of years. The reason being, if people knew we're still around, everyone would be wanting a magical solution to their problems. Also, most would fear us and we'd be hunted down and killed."

Jack nodded his head sadly. Fear was a powerful thing, and most people feared things different from themselves. It was a sad reality.

"The magical world is diverse. All the creatures in fairy tales and horror movies you heard about, are real. Werewolves, Unicorns, Dragons, Trolls, and Giants are just to name a few. We also have our own ministry that is tasked with keeping our world a secret."

"And Hermione is a witch?" Miranda asked.

Lily nodded with a smile.

"Yes. And judging by the power of the charm she used, I'd say she'll be pretty powerful once she has been trained."

"And where do you receive the training?" Jack asked her.

"Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry was where Lily and I went. There are several other schools across Britain that offer schooling in magic, but Hogwarts is known as the best around. Don't be surprised for her to receive offers to attend any of the other schools." James explained, now that he had recovered. There was still a dull throb, but the pain was gone.

"And which would you recommend, should the time come for the offers." Jack inquired.

"Hogwarts. Not just because we went there, but because more successful witches and wizards graduate from there, gaining higher paying jobs, mostly due to it's prestige." James replied.

Jack knocked back his drink before speaking again.

"So...can Harry do any magic yet?" He asked, still coming to terms with what he had seen.

James grinned.

"My son here skipped a few years of training and is able to become an Animagus." He paused and saw their confused looks. "He's able to turn into an animal. It's the only thing he can control, really, until he goes to school."

"Can...can you do it as well?" Miranda asked.

James nodded before sending his son a grin. Harry walked next to his father, and both male Potters, sporting the same grin, transformed into their animal forms. Prongs stood tall and proud as Harry shook himself off before looking at a curious Hermione. The wolf walked over to her, able to be eye level, even with her sitting down and lowered it's head onto her lap. Hermione hesitantly petted him, watching his tail wag slowly. The wolf nudged her hand with it's nose. Hermione giggled and scratched him behind his ears, watching his eyes close and his tail lazily sway from side to side. Hermione stop her ministrations, causing the wolf to whine.

"Sit." She commanded.

The wolf immediately complied before it realized what had happened. He barked in annoyance as Hermione laughed. The wolf transformed back into Harry and sent a playful glare at Hermione.

"Nice, Mione. Real nice."

She smiled at him.

"If you're a good boy, I'll give you a bone."

Harry pouted while the adults laughed. After a few minutes of laughter, Jack took a deep breath before speaking to the elder Potters.

"Alright. So...Hermione is a witch. All the creatures we've heard about from bed time stories and horror stories are true, and there is a whole world of magical beings hidden from sight. That about sums it up?"

Both Potters nodded.

"Well, I guess since Harry is going to...er...Hogwarts, than we might as well send Hermione too. After all, I don't think she'll like it if she can't go to school with her friend."

Hermione squealed and hugged her father as Lily and James watched.

"It'll be a few more years until they get the invite. Normally, Hogwarts doesn't send the letters out for first year students until they are eleven. With Hermione being born in September, she'll have to wait until Harry starts." Lily explained.

They nodded as Lily turned to James.

"Now what's this about Harry falling off you broom?"

The Grangers spent the next few hours learning about the world their daughter would become part of. They left that night, feeling like things couldn't get any weirder. Oh, how wrong they were...

-X-X-X-X-X-X-

(Old Dimension)

Albus Dumbledore frowned as he looked over the notes he had made. That blasted Mudblood and her Husband had slipped through his clutches. He needed them to bring down Voldemort, and they had disappeared. It had taken several years to even understand how they had disappeared, and what he saw angered him. They had slipped dimensions, an art lost with Merlin. How a simple muggleborn had figured it out was beyond him. He knew he needed the Potters, or more specifically, their son, to defeat that bastard

Riddle. The only problem was, he wouldn't be able to drag that Harry Potter to his dimension, but...Albus grinned evilly as his mind came up with the perfect alternative. If he could find their signature, and foreable pull them to their original Dimension, than the brat would have no other alternative to follow after them. Then, once he was there, he would force the brat to face off against Riddle. After he defeated him, Albus would kill the Potters. If he failed, he'd defeat the weakened Riddle, and then kill the Potters. Albus hummed happily to himself. Sure, it would take years to even work out the formula to do it, but, with Voldemort stalled out in his conquest of Magical Britain, he had all the time he needed.

Chapter 4 New Rules

July 31st rolled around quicker than anyone could have expected, and Harry was ecstatic about his sixth birthday party. James and Lily watched as he happily ran over to his two male friends, Neville Longbottom and Draco Black. Draco had been accepted into the Black family not long after Lucius had been arrested and charged with multiple counts of murder, torture, and several other nasty things. His cell in Azkaban was certainly not the best of accommodations. And to say that Narcissa had been happy with her divorce was an understatement. She had literally crushed Sirius in a hug when he had told her that he could dissolve her marriage as the new Head of the Black family. The only person missing from the party was Hermione, and she'd be arriving soon enough anyway. Harry grinned widely as he waved the two over.

"Neville! Drake! Hey!"

Draco shook his head, smirking slightly.

"You'll never call me by my first name, will you Harry?" He asked.

Harry grinned even wider.

"Nope. And besides, you didn't have a problem with Luna calling you Drake now did you?" He teased.

Draco scowled before he responded.

"Be quiet before I make fun of the name Hermione calls you."

Harry blanched before sending a glare at his cousin.

"You swore you'd never tell!"

"Tell what?" Neville asked.

Harry groaned as Draco turned to him.

"She calls him Jim, since in her words, 'he's just like the handsome captain on Star Tech.'" He told Neville in a sickly sweet voice.

"For one, it's Star Trek. And two, I really doubt she said that, Drake."

"Whatever, Jim." Draco sneered.

Harry growled in frustration and decided to ignore his cousin, instead, turning to Neville.

"So how are things with you, Neville?" He asked.

He shrugged.

"Okay. Mum and Dad have been acting weird though. Dad won't let her lift anything heavier than a pillow and she gets annoyed at him. I don't understand it."

Harry nodded his head.

"Yeah. Dad's started to do the same thing with Mum. She turned him into a canary last time he tried." He mused.

Neville laughed as Draco shook his head.

"Adults are weird." He stated.

The other two boys agreed and they headed for the broom shed, talking about anything a group of six year olds would find interesting.

"Uncle Moony and Uncle Padfoot left their brooms here last time. You guys wanna take a go?" Harry asked, grinning as he grabbed his father's Cleansweep.

Neville shook his head, and Draco simply stared at him, amused.

"What? We have to practice if we're gonna make the quidditch team." Harry reasoned.

"We won't be allowed on the team, Potter. At least not until second year." Draco explained, yet again.

"But we can still practice. I think I'll try for chaser. What about you two?" He asked casually.

"Seeker. Only position where you can avoid all the hassle of toting around a giant red ball." Draco responded.

"But that's so boring! Flying around in circles, looking for a small flash of gold...blimey, at least being a chaser puts you in the action!" Harry reasoned.

"True, but the odds of a bludger knocking your teeth out are higher. I'll stick with boring."

Harry sent him a grin.

"What's a matter pretty boy? Can't hang?" He teased.

Neville watched, amused as the two bickered back and forth until they turned to the sound of Hermione running toward them, grinning widely.

"Harry! Happy Birthday!" She cried as she pulled him into a hug.

"Thanks Mione." He responded, blushing slightly.

Hermione stepped back and handed Harry his present, beaming brightly. Harry glanced down at the package before opening it. Inside was a book on Grey Wolves. He grinned and gave Hermione a brief hug.

"Thank you, Hermione."

Hermione shyly smiled before looking over at Neville and Draco.

"Hello you two."

They sounded out their greeting and the four children headed to the house where all the adults were laughing at some joke Sirius had made. The man was grinning widely and appeared to be enjoying the attention. Harry shook his head and walked to his room to drop his book off while the other three sat at the table, waiting for the cake to come. Harry returned not long after they had sat down and found himself steered to the head of the table, where he looked over to his mother as she brought the cake out, smiling. Everyone began the customary happy birthday song, all the while, Harry was grinning as only a six year old could. After blowing out the candles, with help from his Dad, they dug into the cake. The party went well for Harry, having received several cool items. His Dad had given him a book

on different Quidditch moves. Sirius got him his own cleansweep four, much to Lily's annoyance. Remus had gotten him a picture of a stag, a grim, and a werewolf, much to Harry's delight, that had the three animals goofing off and playing around. His mum got him a new set of robes and a new set of muggle clothes. Harry thanked her, knowing it was her prerogative as his mother to get him clothes. The Longbottoms had chipped in on a gift with Narcissa and had gotten him a set of Quidditch robes from Puddlemore, the team Harry and James supported almost religiously. Draco and Neville had both worked together and had gotten him a beginners Potions book. Harry thanked everyone.

"This is great."

James smiled.

"Well, you only turn six once, kiddo. Now go ahead and go play with your friends."

Harry called out for them to follow and all of them rushed out the door to the backyard for a game of hide and seek, while the adults watched them fondly.

"So, Alice. Why is Frank so adamant about not letting you do any heavy lifting?" Lily asked with a smirk.

Alice's face lit up as she beamed at Lily.

"Well, if you must know, you nosey Potter. We're going to have another baby." She told her happily.

Lily squealed in delight and hugged her best friend, while James gave the standard male congratulations. A pat on the back and a hand shake, coupled with a promise of a Guy's Night Out. Everyone congratulated them as Frank smiled sheepishly and Alice simply smiled beautifully.

"Well, I suppose Lily and I have some good news of our own. Lily?" James smirked at his wife.

She huffed in annoyance and crossed her arms.

"You just can't wait to brag, can't you?"

James shrugged.

"I'm a Marauder. It's what I am. You love me." He finished the sentence with his tongue out at Lily.

She sighed and looked at him lovingly.

"I do."

"So what's the good news?" Jack asked as he sipped his coffee.

Lily looked up at them shyly.

"I'm pregnant as well."

It was James' turn to be congratulated by Frank.

"Looks like you're still losing, James." Frank teased about the fact that Neville was older than Harry, and that the newest addition would be older than James' newest child as well.

"Hey. At least I can control myself around my wife, Frank. I believe I heard you both at the Ministry in your office, if I'm not mistaken."

Frank blushed scarlet and sent a small glare at James, who let out a chuckle. They were broken from their laughter by a sudden pop. Standing on the patio stood Albus Dumbledore, smiling at them all.

"Ah. I see the party has begun. Perhaps my watch needs to be checked." He mused as he walked into the kitchen.

"I believe the term fashionably late applies in this instance Albus." Lily teased.

Albus smiled and sat down in the offered chair.

"Quite so. I have a bit of good news. I have managed to come across two more of those vile artifacts we discussed a few years back."

The whole crowd went silent as Albus rubbed his temples.

"I still cannot believe he went to such lengths to forestall his own death."

James shared a brief glance with the others.

"He was pure evil, Headmaster. Besides, once we figure out how many he made, we'll be able to destroy them and get rid of him forever. Whether it be Life Sentence in Azkaban or death."

Albus sighed.

"As much as I would like to throw him in jail and toss away the key, I think the only option available with dealing with him is death. It is the only option to make sure he never rises again."

The others agreed as Albus collected his thoughts.

"Enough of this talk. We are here to celebrate Harry's Birthday." He smiled again as he pulled a small package out of his robes.

"What's this?" James asked as he took the item.

"Harry's present. Hagrid and I both put our heads together and came up with a stuffed wolf. It will yip and try to look intimidating, but it's a big softy." He smiled as the others snickered.

"Just like Hagrid." Frank mused.

"Oh, and congratulations to you as well, Frank and Alice."

They both looked at him with shock.

"How did you...?"

"The register at Hogwarts added a new last name to it this morning. Another Longbottom."

Both looked at each other before smiling happily. Albus chuckled as he looked over to James and Lily.

"I take you are expecting as well?" He asked pleasantly.

Lily nodded, smiling as Albus nodded his head.

"Very good. It's nice to see everyone recovering. Now, as much as I wish I could stay, I have an unfortunate amount of paperwork to complete. I shall see you all another time."

Everyone said their good byes and Albus left, but not before seeing all of the children. At the end of the day, Harry said good bye to his friends and went inside, tired, but happy and fell asleep just as quickly. It was a quiet night, with Lily and James sitting in the front room, watching the telly when the screen began to display static. James quickly rose, wand in hand as Lily made her way to Harry's room. Both froze at the ghostly image of Albus Dumbledore. The vision grinned darkly and vanished, but not before they heard, "Found you." It appeared things were going to be more complicated than they appeared.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

(Old Dimension)

Albus solidified back in his office, before staggering to his desk. It had taken a lot of his power to force the spell to work. But he had succeeded. He knew he was years away from being able to pull anyone through a dimensional void, but, he was making progress. He cracked his neck, just as Minerva entered the room, looking worried.

"Albus. Crawley is gone. The muggles are in a right foul state. Everyone is scared, Albus. With Crawley gone, it's only a stones throw from London. What do we do?" She asked.

He put on his caring appearance and sat at his desk.

"We must hold the line. As much as it pains me to do this, we must use more lethal spells to combat Riddle. I will send my recommendations to the Minister. Hopefully. We can avoid the muggles discovering us."

Minnie nodded and headed off to send her message to the rest of the order. Had she looked back, she'd have seen a very scary grin on the old man's face.

"Perfect. Once he starts open war with the Muggles, he'll weaken them and himself. I still need those wretched Potters, but now, my plans are starting to come together. It's amazing what a few imperious curses and a fake memory will do to someone."

Albus hummed happily to himself as he began revising his notes. If all worked well, he'd be able to launch his plan into action in the next five to six years. Thankfully, the Muggles would provide an ample distraction to Voldemort. He was so wrapped up in his own little world that he failed to notice several names striking themselves off the future student roster, or that one specific name from Crawley had not been blacked out. He had no way of knowing just how bad he'd get burned playing with fiendfyre.

Chapter V

Harry waited patiently as he, Neville and Draco sat backstage at the school talent show. It had been agreed by all their parents that they should attend a muggle school so that they'd get to see how life was in the muggle world. Harry didn't care, as he was with his friends. Draco and Neville had been intrigued and had both agreed, even though they didn't really have an option in the matter. But today was a special day for them. They'd practiced hard the past three years and had managed to gain decent skill with their act...with magical assistance of course.

"You know...most kids our age aren't as good as us?" Draco mentioned to the two.

Neville paused and nodded his head.

"Yep. We really should thank Aunt Lily for the Musedrops."

Harry nodded his head in agreement, remembering the day they had found them in Diagon Alley...

(Flashback)

Harry wiped his head around as he looked eagerly around the alley. He'd been here a few times, but he still was mesmerized by all the new and unique items always popping up. It was at a small shop near the end of the alley that Harry spotted something interesting. Ignoring his mother's warning earlier that morning to stay close, Harry entered the shop and began looking at a box labeled as Musedrops. Curious, Harry turned the box over and tried to read what it did, but couldn't recognize some of the words. Harry didn't notice the shop owner walking over to him.

"What can I help you with, young man?" He asked pleasantly.

Harry startled as he turned around, seeing a man in his early thirties with short brown hair and a kind smile.

"I was wondering what these are." He told the man, holding out the box.

The man grinned as he took the box and kneeled down in front of Harry.

"These, little one, are called Musedrops. They are used as aides to help witches and wizards to learn to play different types of music. There are drops for guitars, drums, piano, and several others." He explained.

"So...they make you able to do all that?" Harry asked curiously.

"In a way, yes. You see, they give you the understanding of how to play, but not the ability. That still requires you to practice. You take one a month for three years, and you can become proficient in any instrument you chose. I do recommend to the customers that they should only take one type at a time so that the information doesn't get all mixed up and jumbled."

Harry stared in awe of the box as his mother entered the store.

"Excuse me. Have you seen a small boy-Harry James Potter!"

Harry looked at his mother sheepishly as she walked over to him.

"What did I say this morning?" She demanded as the owner stepped back, and watched, amused.

Harry looked at the ground sadly.

"To stay close." He muttered.

Lily sighed and kneeled down to eye level of her son.

"I'll let it go this time, but next time, young man, you will be in big trouble. What did you come in here for anyway?" She asked.

"I believe he was interested in my Musedrop display and was curious about it." The owner answered.

Lily rose to her feet and looked over at the man. Upon her question as to what it was, he explained it to her in greater detail than he had to Harry. Lily was surprised by the item her son had spotted, but did think about the fact that having an instrumental skill would be a good thing for him. She remembered when her mother signed her and

Petunia up for piano lessons when they were younger. Now that she was a mother herself, she saw the benefits. One being it would keep Harry entertained, and give him a new hobby other than learning to be a prankster like his father. She bought a box from the man, with word that she or her friends may come back, as she was sure that if Harry started something, Draco and Neville would follow. Hermione was already learning how to play violin herself, but it wouldn't hurt to get her some for the instrument.

(End Flash Back)

Harry blinked as he spotted Draco waving his hand at him.

"Huh?"

Draco shook his head.

"I asked if you were ready. We go on in a few minutes."

Harry nodded and picked up his guitar as Neville idly twirled his drumsticks. It still annoyed Harry to no end that his first choice wasn't compatible for him. The box had an initial drop that you took, and based upon the color, would be the one easiest for you to start with. Harry had glowed blue, signifying guitar, where as Draco had been grey for bass, and Neville had glowed a brilliant red for drums. They had one of their other friends, Mike Feldmann, who would play second guitar. Mike grinned at them and flashed a thumbs up as they were called out on stage. Harry took a calming breath, trying to remove his nerves as they stepped out on stage. Once there, he found it harder when he spotted the crowd. He glanced at the others, seeing their nervous look as well. Harry instinctively looked for his parents and spotted them and more. Luna and her dad where here, as were Neville's parents. Narcissa and Sirius were there with Aunt Minerva and Uncle Albus. Hermione, was beaming widely at them as her father sat with her. Harry smiled lightly at his little sister, Annie, short for Ariana. She was more like their mother, meaning she could be a right hot head at times. Didn't help that her red hair had graced her the nickname 'firecracker'. Harry thought it was particularly fitting. He spotted Neville's younger brother, Marcus, bouncing in his seat as he waved at his older brother. Harry and the others took their place as a hand drawn banner dropped down, showing a phoenix in it's full, fiery glory. It was a bit crude, but for a group of ten year olds, it wasn't bad. The waited until the crowd had

settled and Harry nodded his head to the others. They started slow, mostly relying on Harry and Mike to set the pace. After a moment, Mike dropped off, allowing Harry to strum away as the lights around the auditorium shut off, leaving the stage illuminated by the spot lights.

"You and I in a little toy shop buy a bag of balloons with the money we've got Set them free at the break of dawn 'Til one by one, they were gone Back at base, bugs in the software Flash the message, "Something's out there" Floating in the summer sky 99 red balloons go by."

The others joined in a upbeat tempo as the crowd cheered out at their display. The multicolor lights behind them flashed in time with the beat, and the boys began to lose themselves into the music, their nerves barely noticeable.

"99 red balloons floating in the summer sky Panic bells, it's red alert There's something here from somewhere else The war machine it springs to life Opens up one eager eye Focusing it on the sky As 99 red balloons go by." "99 Decision Street, 99 ministers meet Dont worry, You worry, super-scurry Call out the troops now in a hurry!"

Harry smirked as he glanced to Draco and Mike.

"This is what we've waited for This is it boys, this is war The president is on the line As 99 red balloons go by. "

The song lead into a a slower pace as Harry stepped back from the microphone, allowing Draco to step foreword. Mostly because he was the one who had come up with the idea for the next part and was also the only one who could sing it." 99 Kriegsminister Streichholz und Benzinkanister Hielten sich fuer schlaue Leute Witterten schon fette Beute Riefen: Krieg und wollten Macht Mann, wer haette das gedacht Dass es einmal soweit kommt Wegen 99 Luftballons."*

They picked up the pace as the crowd cheered loudly, with Harry hearing Annie over almost everyone else, screaming "That's my brother!" The tempo slowed with Mike taking the final strum as Harry stepped back to the mike, holding it as he closed his eyes." 99 dreams I have had In every one a red balloon It's all over and I'm

standin' pretty In the dust that was a city If I could find a souvenir
Just to prove the world was here..."

Draco stepped over and handed him a single red balloon that Harry looked at, almost as if he was singing to it.

"And here it is, a red balloon I think of you and let it go."

The crowd roared as Harry let it go, and the whole stage went dark, with a single spotlight following the balloon as it floated over the crowd. Back on stage, they made a discreet exit as the teacher in charge of it congratulated them. At the end of the night, they had come in second, only behind the kid who did a magic act that had involved making a teacher disappear. Harry snickered as the boy walked on stage in a magician's outfit, wondering if the kid even had any idea that a wizard would never wear something like that. He paused in thought when he realized that some may actually dress like that. They bid Mike a goodnight as he seemed excited to tell his cousin about their act, who lived in America. They arrived home and the adults were telling them how good they did.

"Yeah, but the kid in the magic act still got first." Draco snorted.

"Yes. I guess it's because most of the children were hoping he could make the rest of the teachers disappear." Albus mused.

Minerva smirked as she looked at the three boys.

"Just don't think you can vanish us when you come to Hogwarts."

"Aunt Minerva, you wound me!" Harry mocked. "You really think we would try that on our favorite Aunt?"

"Yes." She responded, making Harry pout. "And you have been spending too much time with your father."

"Minnie, you wound me!" James spoke, making the others laugh.

Minerva shook her head before wishing everyone a good night and headed home after the Longbottoms and Narcissa left with Draco, leaving Harry, Sirius, Lily, James, Annie and Albus in the kitchen. Harry smirked as he looked over to his little sister.

"So, firecracker. Shouldn't you be in bed?"

She huffed in annoyance at him.

"I'm almost five. I can stay up as long as you can Harry. And don't call me that!" She demanded as she stifled a yawn.

Harry rolled his eyes.

"Sure you can. You about to fall asleep now."

"Stupid." She taunted.

"Runt."

"Mop head."

"Carrottop!" He retorted.

She seemed to go red in the face as she glared at her brother.

"You...You...man-child!"

James snickered at hearing this, as Lily had called him that several times. Lily was torn between amusement at her apparent clone's statement, and scolding them both for their behavior when something very troublesome happen. All around the room, a wind seemed to pick up. But it wasn't normal. Albus was on his feet, wand in hand, looking at the point where the vortex began. James, Lily, and Sirius followed suit, as Harry stepped in front of his sister, protecting her from whatever was happening. His mind recalled the lessons that Jack had been giving the boys and Hermione in self defense, and only hoped that it wasn't going to come to him fighting someone. After several moments, a hole appeared near the wall and surged with energy. Albus cast a shield and calmly watched as the hole widened enough for a person to walk through. After several moments, a being did exit, making Albus raise one eyebrow in curiosity.

"This is something new." He muttered as he looked his duplicate over.

The other Albus grinned triumphantly as he raised his wand, pointing it at Lily and James.

"At last. It has taken me a long time to stabilize that blasted portal."

James snarled as he aimed at the man.

"Get out of our dimension."

Dumbledore smirked.

"You really can't say that, Mr. Potter, as you belong to my dimension. Now, if you'll come with me-"

"Like hell we will." Lily glared. "Just why are you hunting us down? And how did you know we were here?"

Dumbledore glanced at his counterpart before responding.

"Because I need you to help defeat Tom. You two need to have an heir to step up and defeat him. With the Longbottoms gone, it is up to you." He explained.

Albus cocked an eyebrow.

"Why don't you go after him yourself? Surly if you can traverse dimensions, you have the power to defeat him."

Dumbledore looked at Albus and shook his head.

"If you are me, than you know of the prophecy."

Albus nodded, wand still in hand.

"I aware of the true one, yes. But that does not explain why you are here for them."

"Darkness holds the land. Two Warriors, thought defeated, will return. Thrice defying the Dark One, they wield a power he knows not. For he shall mark them his equal. Together, they will defeat the darkness. Separate, the world will fall into everlasting darkness.' That is why I have come for them. They are the ones spoken of in the prophecy."

Albus raised an eyebrow again.

"Have you gone senile?" He asked his counterpart.

James had wondered the same thing many times. Dumbledore shrugged.

"Perhaps, but I am lucid enough to try to save my world. Tom as begun his campaign against the muggles. They will only distract him for so long."

Albus' gaze hardened.

"You'd sacrifice the innocents for time? You monster."

Dumbledore smirked.

"Perhaps. But we really don't have time. We'll be leaving now."

Ariana had saw the wand rise and was pointed at her parents. She quickly moved.

"NO!"

Harry grabbed her and pulled her behind him, keeping his eyes on the evil version of Albus.

"Stay here, Ariana."

Dumbledore froze, looking at the small girl, mouthing her name, but his lapse in concentration were enough for Sirius and Albus to make their move. With two powerful banishing charms, Dumbledore was smash back into the vortex. Albus moved quickly, muttering several different languages for several minutes before he was able to seal the portal. He sighed and literally dropped into the chair he was closest to.

"I think we need a heavier ward protection." James mused.

"Perhaps it is best if I am no longer keyed to the wards?" Albus suggested. "If he is me, than the wards will not allow him entry. I

don't know how it will work with dimensional travel, but if he appears here, it'll likely kill him." Albus explained to the surprised looks.

"And what if it doesn't? We could need your help in sealing him off again and we wouldn't be able to get you here." Lily countered.

Albus sighed.

"This is a discussion we do not have to have right now. If opening the portal drained him as much as closing it drained me, we have a year or so before he'll be able to open another one."

The three adults nodded as Harry took his little sister up to her room before going to sleep himself.

"I want to know how he was able to do that."

James glanced at Lily, seeing her look of concentration.

"Some how, he was able to obtain my notes on dimensional travel. But how? I destroyed them all."

Albus seemed to have the answers.

"If he used what I think he did, than he was able to ascertain your position on earth. But the readout would have been altered from the normal layout. Using that as a starting point, and researching just why it would have been altered, would have lead him to dimensional travel." He explained.

The each shared an uneasy look.

"But how'd he find us specifically? Surly there would have been an infinite number of signatures."

Albus shook his head at Lily's statement.

"Not if he had something to tie the search to you."

The silence that permeated the kitchen was unsettling. For each of them knew there was a coming storm, and they had no way of knowing when the first strikes would occur.

Chapter 6 Pranks and Prophecies

All too soon for Lily, Harry was walking through the barrier to Platform 9 $\frac{3}{4}$, on his way to Hogwarts for the first time. She composed herself, telling herself that she would not cry. James gently squeezed her hand and sent her a reassuring smile as the two Potters followed after their son. They soon found themselves on a somewhat packed platform, as they had agreed to get there early to avoid rushing the children onto the train. Lily looked for Harry and spotted him laughing with Neville and Draco. She looked around in confusion before she spotted Hermione and her parents coming onto the platform. She smirked when Hermione made a beeline for the boys, leaving the parents to watch as they greeted each other. Annie had followed her brother with Marcus in tow, while Lily sighed.

"Why does this feel so hard to let them go?" She asked.

Alice smiled lightly as Frank held her close to him. Narcissa simply shrugged, agreeing with Lily's statement. Miranda seemed like she was close to crying too as their children pulled their trunks onto the train. The parents walked over to the door as their children came back off the train. The mothers hugged their kids, while the fathers placed a hand on their shoulders, telling them to be good. Each of the boys made a face when their mothers gave them a kiss on the cheek. James gave Harry a small wink, that made the boy grin widely. With a final good bye, the new first years boarded the train, sending a final wave to their families. Harry and his friends found an empty compartment and settled in.

"So, what house do you think you'll be in?" Harry asked casually as he leaned back in his seat.

Draco grinned as he answered.

"Well, everyone knows most of my family were in Slythrien, but I hoping for Gryffindor. Neville?"

Said Longbottom looked to be in thought before he shrugged his shoulders.

"Either Gryffindor or Hufflepuff. Either one would be cool. Hermione?"

She, of course, had her nose buried in a book call Hogwarts: A History. Even though they had curbed her thirst for reading, she still had the occasional tendency to base her choices on books. It was one of her less endearing traits to be honest.

"Well, Ravenclaw sounds like it's for me, but Lily told me that the claws haven't a shred of common sense. There'd be a homicide with in the first night. So...I'm hoping for Gryffindor." She answered, still reading.

All eyes turned to Harry who shrugged.

"Where else? 'Where the brave of heart dwell.' Gryffindor is where I'll be."

No one bothered asking him how he knew as it was Harry they were dealing with. They were a few of the ones who knew what truly happened that night on October 31st. No one but them, Albus, Minerva, Lily, James, Padfoot, and Moony. As far as the rest of the world was concerned, Albus had been there and defeated him. And Harry was perfectly happy with that. He didn't need all that fame or the constant stares. The trip went smoothly, at least until a young boy with red hair had asked to enter. He had stopped at the door and looked disapprovingly at Draco. Harry hardened his gaze as he asked the boy what his problem was. His response of 'He's a junior Death Eater,' quickly earned him a quick and painful exit from the compartment. Harry had banished the boy out of the compartment, though he'd over powered the spell a bit in his anger. Letting out a breath, he slumped back into the seat. Other than the red head, no one bothered them, though Harry did learn that Hermione was indeed a girl. He'd stepped out, as had the others to change in the bathrooms while Hermione changed in the carriage. Harry had been the first one finished and had tried to enter the compartment. While he had been waiting, he heard the tell tale click of the lock being undone and had opened it, thinking Hermione had unlocked it. What he saw caused him to turn, what he had dubbed, 'Firecracker Red'. Hermione quickly covered herself, screaming out him to get out. Harry hastily left, slamming the door closed behind him, breathing heavy. His cheeks remained red as his mind process that he had just seen his best friend half dressed. His blush deepened as he thought of how she'd look in a few years time. In his musings, he never noticed an older red head boy put his wand away and walk to his own compartment. After a few moments, the door opened again

and Harry sheepishly entered, looking at the ground, his blush in place.

"I'm sorry Mione. I heard the lock click and thought you had unlocked the door."

She looked at him doubtfully.

"You didn't use the unlocking charm on the door?" She challenged.

Harry quickly looked up and raised his hands in defense. Hermione had wand in hand and he knew she had been learning several charms that could indeed be rather painful to him.

"I swear I didn't. My wand is still in here, between the cushions where I was sitting."

Hermione checked the area and did in fact, find Harry's wand where he had told her it was. She lowered her wand and passed Harry his, forgiving him, but silently vowing to find out who was responsible. They told no one.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-X-

Harry waited as the sorting hat finished singing it's song with the others. After what felt like forever, McGonagall stepped forward with a roll of parchment, instructing them to come forward as their names were called. He watched as Hermione was sorted, sending her a small smile as she was sorted into Gryffindor, followed by both Neville and Draco. Harry himself walked up to the stool calmly after his name was called and waited for the hat to be placed on his head. He only had to wait a brief moment before the world disappeared from his sight as the too large hat dropped past his eyes.

"Ah...another Potter. Well, let's get this show on the road then. Hmm...Yes...Loyalty beyond measure to your friends...a trait Helga herself would have approved of, but your mind...Ravenclaw would do as well, but...no...your thirst for knowledge isn't as great...Ah...what's this?"

The hat chuckled as Harry cocked an eyebrow in curiosity.

"A plan worthy of Slythrein with plenty of ambition. And a decent amount of cunning...though for pranking...Salazaar wouldn't really like that...but your courage...yes...yes...that'll do perfectly...better be...GRYFFINDOR!" The hat called out.

Harry grinned as he took the hat off and headed to the seat beside Hermione and returned her brief hug. He watched the sorting progress, waiting with the others, but unlike them, he had his wand drawn under the table, pointing at the head table, looking up at the professors. After the last student had been sorted, Albus took his place behind the podium, smiling gently at the students, his eyes twinkling brightly.

"To our new students, welcome! To our returning one, welcome back! I have a few notices to give, but they can wait until after we have partaken in the delicious feast to start the new year. As is, I leave a few words to suffice for now." He looked over the student body once more. "Nit wit, tweek, blubber."

Harry shook his head at the old man's humor and turned his attention to the table as plates began to fill with food. Feeling hunger than usual, Harry piled his plate high and began to devour his food, listening into the conversations around the table, taking note of a pair of red headed twins looking in his direction and smirking. Harry looked back at his plate, smirking to himself.

"I guess Uncle Severus will have to wait. My first targets are those two." He thought as he nudged Draco lightly.

The young black covertly looked in Harry's direction. With an almost unnoticeable nod in their direction, he signal his intent to Draco, he grinned evilly.

"Those are the Weasley twins. They fancy themselves as pranksters greater than the Marauders." He explained in a whisper.

"Greater than the Marauders, huh?" Harry mused as he chewed on a piece of chicken. "Just another reason for me to target them."

"What's the other reason?" Draco asked as he helped himself to a steak.

Harry shook his head, blushing slightly.

"Nothing really. Just something that happened on the train."

Draco took that as a sign not to push and went back to eating. After they had all gorged themselves, Albus rose back to his feet, grinning. He started his usual talk about what was and what was not allowed in the school along with a warning/reminder to the students that the forbidden forest was just that...forbidden. His announcement of the third floor corridor did elicit some surprise from the students, mostly from the prefects. Harry himself, did not really care as most of his plans for this year involved pranking and learning as much as he could for when Voldemort returned. At the end of the speech, Harry gave another nod to Draco and both angled their wands under the table and sent their choice of spell at the twins. Both boys shot up, gripping their backsides just before their robes and clothes disappeared, leaving them standing in the Great Hall in only their boxers. They looked at each other dumbly before bursting into laughter, followed by the rest of the Hall. Albus chuckled before he returned them to their clothed glory and looking pointedly at Harry, who tried his best to look innocent, but knew that he would be speaking to the headmaster tonight. Sure enough, Minerva passed him a scroll, trying to look disapproving, but failing. Harry glanced at it and sighed. Everyone departed for the dormitories for the night while Harry was on his way to the headmaster's office. It only took him a few moments before he reached the door and was instructed to enter. Albus looked at him with amusement as Harry sat in front of him.

"I must say, Harry. That was quite an opening prank. Though I must ask why you targeted the Weasley Twins."

Harry shrugged.

"They pranked me on the train. I pranked them back. Marauder style." He finished with a grin.

Albus shook his head before he looked at Harry seriously.

"Unfortunately, I do have one more thing to discuss with you. I had hoped I would be able to prevent you from this burden, but alas, I can not." He told him gravely.

Harry knew this was the time to be mature and sat up straighter.

"I'm listening sir."

Albus looked up at him sadly.

"Harry, what I am about to tell you will be a shock. It's a prophecy...about you."

Harry blinked in surprise.

"A prophecy? Does it have to do with Voldemort?"

"Yes and no." Albus began. "It deals with two dark lords...and the other is a wizard we both know."

Chapter VII Revelations of a Wise Mind

Harry sat and blinked in confusion before he responded to the Headmaster's words.

"Sir, shouldn't my parents be here?"

Albus chuckled.

"They were the ones who agreed to telling you this. I spoke with them just last week about my intentions." he answered the young Potter.

Harry seemed to accept the fact.

"Alright sir. It's not the same one the other you told, is it?" Harry asked.

"No." Albus began. "I believe that my counterpart has caused a slight bit of brain damage from forcing his way across dimensions. To put it simply, he used blunt force to travel, where as your mother used a slipping through the cracks method."

Harry pondered what Albus meant before he understood.

"So...basically, he created an unstable field around himself, powering it completely by magic and pure force of will, smashing through the natural resistance between such travel, and it ended up scrambling his thought process." Harry paused before continuing. "Where as mum used a dimensional bubble that allowed her and dad to slip through the naturally occurring cracks between dimensions. Which means they simply bypassed all resistance. Right?" Harry asked.

Albus beamed widely at him.

"Very well summarized Mr. Potter. Ten points to Gryffindor." Albus chuckled. "But yes, that is correct. With my counterpart, it caused information to become muddled and such, and simply put, he has caused slight senility to set in."

Harry frowned but nodded his understanding as Albus pulled out his pensive, and adding in a silvery strand of a memory into it.

"I wish for you to view the memory I have of the prophecy. It was made when I was here at Hogwarts as a student myself."

Albus tapped the pensive with his wand, and a ghostly figure of an elderly man rose out of the pensive. His eyes were blank and his voice was Horace as he spoke.

"Torn from familiar, and thrust into similar, two warriors shall sire the chosen one. Destined to confront what once seemed gentle, but is now twisted beyond measure. For twice will the chosen one be marked, by the lords of dark. The chosen one will be of grey, and must find the other, for carrying the power to vanquish the darkness, two must become one, least light and dark both be destroyed..."

The figure sank back into the pensive, leaving a stunned Harry and a somber Albus. After several minutes of silence, Harry spoke in an almost whisper.

"Are....are you sure it's me?"

Albus nodded sadly.

"Unfortunately, yes. You are the only person I know who matches the description. 'Torn from familiar and thrust into similar.' This refers to your parents, as they left their home dimension and entered here to ours which is very familiar to the old one. 'Twice will the chosen one be marked, by the Lords of Dark'. This is open to any form of interpretation in what ways, but I believe the scar on your forehead signifies Voldemort, while my counterpart seems eager to use you to his own means, elevating you to his equal." Albus responded.

Harry sat in shock for several minutes before speaking.

"I...I don't know how I should feel. What about the last bit? The one of finding the other chosen? Who is that?"

Albus looked at him thoughtfully.

"I believe that it may be Miss Granger. However, I have no conclusive proof if it is. I wish we had more time, but a feeling of foreboding has settled over me and I believe the hour draws near to the fulfillment of the prophecy." Albus smiled lightly at Harry, his blue

eyes twinkling brightly. "However, that does not mean we should allow fear to control us. We must continue on with life and simply prepare as best we can."

Harry returned the smile, if only slightly.

"Well, we shall prepare, young Harry, but you mustn't forget to enjoy life. So, off to bed, and we will speak more later. I believe your first class of the day is Charms. Filius will be looking forward to seeing you in class."

Harry nodded and left the office, wishing the Headmaster a good night. After the door had shut, Albus slumped in his chair, taking off his glasses and rubbing the bridge of his nose. Fawkes thrilled from his perch. Albus sighed and closed his eyes, leaning his head back.

"I see no other way, Fawkes. I swore to prevent him from having to handle this burden, but no matter what I do, it's thrust upon him." He muttered.

Fawkes gave him a disapproving look as he squawked at him, in a disappointed tone.

"I agree. Beating myself up about it won't change anything, but I wish fate would stop dealing him a shitty hand. Heaven knows how hard it would have been for him if Lily and James hadn't of crossed dimensions."

A final thrill sounded, making Albus sit up so fast, his back popped in a few places and his head whipped to Fawkes so fast, it was a wonder he didn't get whiplash. But the smile on his face of hope was unmistakable.

"Yes...yes. That just might work old friend."

-x-x-x-x-x-x-

Harry and the others tromped down to the dungeons where Potions were held and took their seats without word. Severus wasn't there yet and Harry grinned at Draco, who smirked. Before they could hatch a cunning prank on the man, the door banged open with Severus striding into room, looking bad tempered and speaking to them harshly. At the end of his short speech, his eyes landed on an

innocent looking Harry. Severus knew an innocent looking Potter was a dangerous one.

"Potter!" He snapped. "Where would you look if I told you to get me a bezoar?" He asked.

Harry frowned momentarily before responding.

"It's a stone in the stomach of a goat. Also, anyone who is gifted in potions should always have one in their ingredient stores as it will save from most poisons." He responded.

Snape nodded briskly and looked to Draco, who looked bored.

"Black. What is the difference between monkshood and wolfsbane?"

"Just the time of year it's picked. It's the same plant sir."

Snape looked over to Neville and looked back with curiosity.

"Longbottom. What would you get with an infusion of wormwood and asphodel?"

Neville narrowed his eyes in concentration for several seconds before answering, lightly unsure.

"I think it would be the Draught of Living Death. However a few other potions have the same ingredients in them sir."

Snape nodded his head approvingly before turning to Hermione, who looked uneasy under his gaze. Snape would have snorted in amusement, seeing as he had known these four for over seven years now, and she was still shy around him.

"Miss Granger. What are three signs commonly associated with Amortenia?"

Hermione blushed slightly at the mention of the love potion, but answered anyway.

"Brewed correctly, it would have a mother-of-pearl sheen, spiraling steam, and a multi-faceted scent, based upon what attracts the user." She responded.

Snape smirked lightly at her.

"And what scents do you smell from the sample I have before me?" He asked, for he did indeed have samples of the potions he had asked about.

Hermione looked puzzled but rose from her chair and took a smell. All eyes were on her as she closed her eyes briefly before responding, her eyes still closed.

"Freshly mown lawn, new parchment, treacle tart, and..." Her eyes snapped opened and she blushed red as her eyes darted briefly to Harry, before looking at the floor. "Broom polish." She muttered just loud enough for Snape to hear.

Said professor nodded his head, still smiling lightly. He figured he'd get in on the pool now that he had solid evidence to back his bet up. He dismissed Hermione and turned to the class, looking stern again.

"Potions take patience, and a careful hand. There will be no horse playing in here, as one wrong move can literally destroy part of the room with some of these higher level potions." He warned.

He then set them to work on a simple potion, namely a pepper-up potion since even if a mistake was made, all they'd get was a puff of black smoke. At the end of the lesson, he inspected their cauldrons, and while Neville's had been slightly off shade, he had passed them all, stating that he was surprised that for the first time since in all the years he had taught here, no one had melted their cauldrons or failed to pass. The four Marauders headed off to their first class, laughing and joking all the way, not noticing Snape watching them with a hint of apprehension. It was only a matter of time until they began their own pranks, and if last night was any indication, their level would rival that of the old Marauders. That thought alone made him shudder as he headed back to his classroom.

-X-X-X-X-X-X-

(Old Dimension)

Dumbledore looked over his calculations and such as the reports of Voldemort's sudden disappearance lay scattered across his table. He felt that the Dark Lord was simply biding his time from his latest failed assault on London. Dumbledore had to give the muggles credit. They didn't back down easy. Especially their allies, the Americans. Clever bastards had begun to take the Death Eaters down at range or simply set traps and explosives that detonated when they were tripped. All in all, it slowed the Dark Forces down and it worked for Dumbledore. He just had to wait until they both weakened each other sufficiently before he stepped in and took over. It would be simple. He'd be the hero, this time, on a global scale in both worlds, and with careful manipulation, Magical kind would reign supreme. He closed his eyes and rolled up his calculations. He was still a year or so out from gaining possession of his greatest weapon. Grinning to himself, he thought of his apprentice. The lad had embraced the carp Dumbledore spoon fed him, that it was sad, really. Dumbledore had to congratulate himself on that particular part of the plan and didn't notice the door to his office open. He did, however, notice the magical signature, even as suppressed as it was. Without looking up, he passed a scroll to his young apprentice.

"You're getting better, however, I was still able to sense you. But, then again, I have had years of practice."

Dumbledore looked up as his apprentice read over the scroll, before tucking it into his robes. The figure waited patiently.

"When do we go after them, Headmaster?" The boy asked.

Dumbledore grinned.

"Soon." He answered.

The boy grinned darkly.

"They will pay for abandoning me."

Dumbledore saw the hate and rage flash in those emerald green eyes. Yes. This particular part of his modified plan was definitely a stroke of genius.

Chapter VIII Dancing with Trolls

The days began to fly by for Harry and his friends. Sure, some of the things they learned were at times, hard for them to understand, but between the four of them, they were able to help each other tremendously. For examples, Harry seemed to have a rather impressive grasp of transfiguration and charms and was able to perform those spells quicker than even Hermione. Where as Draco was great at potions and able to help a slightly nervous Neville out and pass tid bits of information to the others to make things easier. Neville seemed to have a green thumb and prevented Hermione from becoming more intimately familiar with a rather feelly plant in the green house. And Hermione covered almost everything else. She was able to absorb information and break it down to a level that the other three could understand, such as History of Magic or Defense against the Dark Arts. Speaking of said class, Harry was thoroughly disappointed with the subject and teacher. Quirrell seemed to be incapable of teaching them any real defensive spells and only told tales that Harry was pretty sure were all fake. It was with an increasing scowl that he and his friends entered the Great Hall for the Halloween feast that Hermione spotted his scowl and gave him a sympathetic look.

"I'm sure it'll get better Harry."

He shook his head as they each took their favorite seats and waited for the Headmaster to begin his normal speech.

"I doubt it. I asked Dad and Mum about the class when they were here and they had already learned several defensive spells, including the stunning spell and about loads of Dark Creatures from hinky punks to werewolves." Harry groaned as the buzz of conversation began to fill the hall as more students arrived.

"But we already know a werewolf." Draco smirked.

"Shut it. What are we supposed to do if we run up against a Dark creature...say...tonight? What use we'll we be if no professor is around?" Harry challenged.

Neville chuckled.

"Oh yeah Harry. I'm sure some troll or something is going to come into the school tonight, somehow using it's limited intelligence to get past the extremely complex wards, and we'll somehow end up facing off against it." The others laughed as Harry glared at Neville. "The odds of that aren't very high my messy haired friend." Neville stated as he looked up at the Head Table.

Dumbledore chose that moment and rose to his feet, smiling kindly upon the hall.

"I must say, so far this has been an interesting year. And yet we are only at the start! Now, for those of you new students, I wish to explain why we are having a feast tonight. To do that, I would like to call upon Alexander, the Sorting Hat to explain."

All eyes locked onto the Hat that appeared on it's stool. The hat seemed to be looking over them with curiosity as well as they had.

"I am Alexander, and it has been many, many years since I last taught anyone. Now...let us begin. Halloween is much more than a holiday for people to dress up into random costumes and gather candy from kind strangers. All Hallows Even was the original name for today. It is a celebration dating back to the Romans as a feast to Pomona, The Goddess of Fruits and Seeds, or in the festival of the dead call Parentalia. It also has it's ties to the Celtic Festival of Samhain." The hat paused and looked back around the hall. "Now, you may be wondering why this is important to us? Why, quite simply, it is the day that Magic first appeared upon our lands. Several thousand years ago, even before the calander had been invented, people randomly seemed to gain Magical powers, though this is more of an increase through evolution. In reality, the magical lay lines that crisscross our planet had been steady leaking magic into the world. Those who decided to reside in areas of high magical concentration eventually would gain magical members in their families. Upon this day, almost ten thousand years ago, the first witches and wizards came together and formed the magical world. Granted, much has changed in that time, but they were the founding members. We celebrate today, not only to give thanks for the granting of our abilities, but as a way to pass on the importance of the holiday."

The hall erupted into applause as Alexander bowed to them and vanished in a slight pop making Harry glance to the others.

"Think the hat knows how to apparate?" Harry asked them.

Draco shrugged and Neville looked thoughtful while Hermione responded.

"Anything here is possible, though it's supposed to be impossible to apparate within the grounds of the school." She explained.

Harry nodded and looked back up to the Head area, where Albus was bringing the speech to a close.

"Now, as we have our heads filled, I believe it is time for us to begin the feast. Dig in!" He clapped his hands once before sitting down and around the hall, steaming piles of food appeared on the tables.

Harry had just settled in to devour his steak, chicken, potatoes, and pumpkin juice when the doors to the rear of the hall slammed open. Harry, like everyone else, looked to see a distraught Quirrell sprinting down the aisles. Harry glared at Neville once they understood what he was screaming.

"TROLL! IN THE DUNGEON!"

The man came to a stop and doubled over, trying to catch his breath as Albus rose to his feet, sending off several noise makers to silence the students.

"QUIET! Prefects, lead your houses back to the dorms and stay there until I or your Head of House come and get you. Professors to the dungeons." Albus ordered.

Harry and his group rose and followed Percy Weasley up to the tower and Harry sent Neville a mild glare that the Longbottom grinned weakly at in return.

"Hey. At least we don't have to face it."

And that lasted about ten seconds before they heard Pravarti's voice speaking to Katie Bell in a worried tone.

"I haven't seen Lavender since after last period when she went to the loo. I don't think she knows of the troll." Her worried voice easily carried to their ears.

"Don't worry. She'll be fine with the Professors going after the troll." Katie reassured her.

Harry glanced at Draco, who had a thoughtful look on his face. Harry sighed and the four ducked into an empty classroom on the second floor. Once the door was shut, He turned to Draco.

"I know that look, Drake. And while I would rather not run the risk of running into the troll, I also won't turn my back on a fellow Gryffindor." He looked over to Hermione who was biting her lower lip.

She saw his look and nodded her head.

"We should go get her. I agree with Katie that there won't be any danger to us this far from the dungeons. And imagine what would happen if she headed back to the Great Hall to find it empty. She'd go looking for someone to find out what happened and might run into the troll herself." Hermione explained.

"Yeah. I think we should go, as the odds of it getting past the professors and going into the exact bathroom where she is, is very slim."

Harry wanted to send a retort to this, but had to agree with Neville. His musings were cut short by the door opening and Ron Weasley entered, looking nervous. Harry and the others sent him a questioning look that he seemed to understand.

"I want to help you guys finding Lavender. She's my friend."

"Your friend? How?" Harry blurted out.

Ron shrugged his shoulders.

"She helps me with Transfiguration and potions, I help her with Charms and Defense. She's not a bad person to talk to either."

Harry looked at the others who nodded briefly before he looked back at Ron.

"Alright. Welcome aboard. Now we just have to figure out where she is." Harry told him as he pulled the door open and they filed out into the empty hall.

"Oh, that's easy. She'll be in the second floor bathroom in the east wing, just past the Defense classroom. Says it has the best lighting and cleaner mirrors. Whatever that means." He muttered the last part.

Harry perked up and they headed to said bathroom quickly, keeping an eye out for the professors and anything large coming toward them. After several minutes of walking, they came across the bathroom and made to enter it when Hermione blocked them, looking stern.

"I'll go in alone. You four wait out here."

"Why?" Ron inquired.

"Would you like to explain to a professor what you were doing in a female bathroom should they find us up here?" She asked.

Ron blushed red and shook his head.

"On second thought, that's a brilliant idea Hermione. We'll just be down the hall." Ron pointed and headed off that way.

Hermione shooed them away and the three boys caught up to Ron who looked at Draco apologetically.

"Draco...I...I want to say I'm sorry for what I said on the train. I didn't think and after seeing how different you are from your father...I feel like a complete arse for what I said on the train."

Draco smiled and placed a hand on the Weasley's shoulder.

"Don't worry about it. I understand and I plan on bringing honor back to the Malfoy name when I am old enough to take my place as Head of the Malfoy Family. I may not have the name, but by blood I am the Heir."

Ron smiled and nodded and the four relaxed visibly as Ron decided to change the subject.

"So...I heard you and Harry tried out for the Quidditch team."

Draco nodded his head.

"Yeah. We were placed on the reserve team for now. We might be on the starting positions next year."

"What positions do you both play?" Ron asked.

"I'm a seeker and Harry here is a chaser. You?"

"Keeper. But Wood told me to try out again next year. I'm not a very consistent Keeper." Ron explained to them.

They were broken from their talk by a rather repugnant smell reaching them.

"What the bloody hell is that smell?" Neville gasped out, holding his nose.

Before anyone could offer a suggestion, three very loud female screams reached their ears. The four looked to one another before bolting to the girls loo and rushed in, only to stop short. Harry turned to Neville, who grimaced apologetically.

"I hate you."

For in the bathroom, stood a troll of about twelve feet with a club about as long as it was tall. Said club was raised above it's head and aimed at the targets that Harry, Ron, Draco, and Neville saw were Hermione, Lavender, and Daphne Greengrass. Hermione pulled her wand and cried out her spell just as the club began it's downward journey.

"Protego!" She called out.

Harry saw a weak looking wall of light appear in front of her, flickering weakly. The club slammed against it and the wall broke, but it deflected the club into the ground. The force of the impact

hurled Hermione against the wall, where her head collided with a nasty thud. That was all Harry needed before he reacted.

"Distract it!" He called to the other.

He, himself, grabbed a piece of pipe and threw it at the troll. It may have been the impact, or just the shout, but the confused troll turned and spotted four new targets and let out a roar, club raised menacingly. Harry pulled his wand and grabbed the trolls club with a levitation charm.

"Quick! Draco! Turn it into a needle!"

"Are you off your rocker? I can't change something that big!"

"Just do it!" Harry screamed as the troll looked back to see his club floating fifteen feet up.

Draco grumbled and sent his spell, turning the club into a needle, but it was still about the size of an average student in Hogwarts. Draco sent Harry a look that said, 'Told you so' before rushing past the troll. Harry jutted his chin to Neville, telling him to get by the troll. Harry sent a stream of sparks at the troll and backed out of the door, as it roared in anger and lumbered after him.

"That's it, ugly. Follow the Harry!" He called and took off out the door.

The troll followed and the bathroom was left in silence as Draco growled in frustration.

"Great. Just great. He takes off with a troll on his heels. What are we supposed to do?"

"Explaining your last statement would be a good start, Mr. Black."

Harry in the mean time had managed to get the Troll into the front hall but found himself unable to open the doors. So now he was simply hoping that the noise it attracted from smashing the suits of armor around the hall brought at least one of the professors.

"That's it stupid! Keep making noise!" Harry yelled as he ducked another thrown suit of armor. "Bugger seems intent on squashing me." He muttered.

Harry sent a quick banishing hex at a helmet and sent it hurtling into the troll's face. Apparently metal flying at high speeds and hitting a fleshy face equals pain as the troll covered its nose, stomping around in pain.

"Huh. I guess it's true that everyone has a plan until they get hit in the face. Shit!" He ducked again as the troll pulled a piece of lumber bigger and heavier than Harry off the wall and threw it at the boy.

"Where the hell is a professor when you need one?" Harry wondered out loud.

"What about six professors?"

Harry looked over and spotted Albus, Minerva, Severus, Filius, Quirrell, and Professor Vector at the top of the stair case, wands at the ready. Unfortunately, the troll moved quicker than they had anticipated and grabbed Harry by the ankle. It held him up, and he stared into its angry eyes. Harry glared back and used the only tool in hand.

"FUCK YOU!" He screamed and jammed his wand into the troll's eye, all the way to the handle.

The troll screamed in pain and dropped the boy, who let out a grunt of pain from landing on his back. Harry rolled away and watched in awe as the professors sent a stream of stunners at the troll, smashing into its chest, throwing it back into the main doors. Harry heard them groan and was impressed they didn't buckle as the troll slid to the ground. Harry cautiously moved to the troll, and with a good tug, he pulled his wand out of the troll's eye and wiped it on the creature's trousers before facing the professors, all looking at him sternly, except Quirrell who looked more surprised that he'd survived the encounter. Albus was the first to speak.

"Mr. Potter, if you'll follow me to my office, we can discuss what in the hell caused you to take on a full grown mountain troll."

Harry grimaced at the tone of voice and fell into step behind them and soon found himself in the Head's office with three of the heads of house in the same room, along with Ron, Neville, Draco, Daphne, and Lavender. Albus looked upon them tiredly as he sat down.

"Please explain yourselves."

"It was our fault, professor. Myself and Daphne had been talking and lost track of time. Hermione had come in to the bathroom and told us about the troll and offered for Daphne to come with us to the tower until either yourself or Professor McGonagall came and gave the all clear." Lavender began. "We had just gathered our bags when it came into the bathroom. Hermione pushed us against the wall and drew her wand. It was just about to smash her when she cast the shield charm."

Filius' eyes widened briefly.

"The Shield Charm? For her to accomplish even a weak one at her age is impressive. It usually takes until third to fourth year for someone to be able to pull that off." He told Albus.

"Indeed. It seems Ms Granger is full of all sorts of surprises. So, what happened next?" He asked Lavender.

"Actually, sir, we can take it from here. Draco, Neville, Ron, and myself heard their scream when it went in and headed to try to help. We distracted it. I levitated its club while Draco turned it into a needle." Harry told him.

"That does explain the abnormally large sewing needle there." Severus mused. "Why didn't you simply spear the troll with that?"

Harry and the others looked at the ground in embarrassment.

"Didn't think of that, sir." Harry muttered.

Albus chuckled.

"They do say hindsight is twenty-twenty. Please, continue."

"Well, I decided to get the troll out of the small room so that the girls wouldn't get hurt. Neville and Draco went over to them as I led it to the Great Hall. And...well you saw the rest."

The teachers shared a look and nodded before McGonagall spoke.

"Each of you four will receive a ten point deduction each for not informing a prefect of the situation." She told them sternly.

Harry fumed silently, since they had just cost Gryffindor forty points total.

"However, your actions have shown you uphold the traits of our house. Mr. Malfoy, for your use of transfiguration in that situation, I award you twenty points. Mr. Longbottom, for your loyalty to your friends and your courage, I award you twenty points as well." Albus paused and smiled kindly at Ron. "For informing your housemates of the situation and helping them to find your year mates quickly, I award you twenty points, Mr. Weasley."

Ron blushed red and looked at his feet as Albus glanced over to Filius, who grinned widely.

"Twenty-five points to Ms Granger for her use of an exceptionally advance charm for her age and thirty points to Mr. Potter on the same grounds."

They all looked at each other and grinned before Minerva spoke up.

"Just because your actions have made you heroes doesn't mean I will allow you to do such things again. Next time, please find a Prefect or someone to get us first. I don't want to be the one explaining to your parents how you each were killed for sheer stupidity. Oh, and ten points to each of you...for sheer dumb luck." She told them as they left the Head's office.

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